

**Robert Garnier's *Hippolyte* (1573): An English Translation of Act V, with an Essay on the
Evolution of a Secondary Character**

An Honors Thesis (HONRS 499)

by

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April 2010

Expected Date of Graduation
May 2010

Abstract

The art of translation is a vital aspect of any literary tradition. Without it, texts would remain inaccessible to certain audiences, effectively impeding the transmission of ideas. In the case of Robert Garnier's *Hippolyte* (1573), translation played an intriguing role. Like many early French Renaissance authors, Garnier found inspiration in the texts of Rome and Greece, especially in those of Seneca the Younger (4 B.C. – A.D. 65). It would be misleading, though, to label *Hippolyte* simply as a French translation of Seneca's *Phaedra*, in spite of their close resemblance. Garnier stayed true to the framework laid out in Seneca's version, while simultaneously redefining the underlying foundation of the characters through his expansion of the Nurse, a secondary character. This topic serves as the theme of the essay found in Appendix B and accompanies my translation of Act V. Preceding the translation are my collected notes on the difficulties of this translation as well as the particular importance of this translation. This translation was originally rendered alone and then refined in a group setting, where each member translated an act of the text.

This thesis is dedicated to
Dr. Gilman, who taught me how to think,
Dr. Stegman, who taught me how to read,
Dr. Thorington, who taught me how to speak,
And to
Mrs. Sue Scott, who opened my eyes to the wonders of French.

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Introduction

As the first English translation of Robert Garnier's *Hippolyte*, this translation bears particular importance. The piece, by itself, serves as the linking element between the Roman and Greek versions of the legend and Jean Racine's *Phèdre*—largely inspired by Garnier's production. With an English rendering finally available, a wider audience will be able to appreciate fully the evolution of this literary tradition. In view of this significance, the primary aim of this thesis was to produce an English rendering of the tragedy, specifically Act V. Clarity and accuracy were overarching goals for the translation; nonetheless, readability was a constant goal.

While working on the translation, I became intrigued by the role of the Nurse, whose evolution in the hands of Garnier marked a noticeable shift in the foundation of the interplay of characters within the tragedy. The essay in Appendix B, which was presented at the 22nd annual Butler University Undergraduate Research Conference, outlines one perspective on how Garnier accomplished the expansion of the Nurse.

Difficulties of Translation

Translation is truly an art that must be honed. It requires an intricate understanding of the source language and an unparallel command of the target language, usually one's mother tongue. Additionally, the author's unique versification, syntax, and vocabulary must be taken into consideration. The tragedy of *Hippolyte* presents many obstacles in regard to these requirements. The text is written in sixteenth-century French, which employed different vocabulary, grammar, and inconsistent orthography (Garnier 19). With the aid of Cotgrave's 1611 dictionary, compiled by Greg Lindahl and available online, the vocabulary and spelling differences became manageable hindrances. The grammar, however, posed a greater problem. Through the notes on sixteenth-century French versification found in the introduction to the Lebègue edition of *Hippolyte*—the definitive edition of the text—, this problem was reduced but never eliminated.

Much of the syntax was heavily influenced by Latin, especially verbal elements. Garnier employed the “periphrastic present, or present of duration” (Garnier 20) with some frequency: “*le va deschirant*” (*Hippolyte* 218) and “*je ne fusse ... meurtrissant*” (*ibid.* 2194). Infinitives were used for “all sorts of dependent clauses, relative, causal, etc.” (Garnier 20): “*que vous sceussiez ouvrir / Les secrets de mon cœur, sans vous les decouvrir*” (*Hippolyte* 1391-2). Adjectives were frequently used adverbially, a practice which Garnier “adopt[ed] with enthusiasm” (Garnier 21). Moreover, the syntax was affected by Garnier's versification. His tragedy is written in rhyming alexandrine couplets, with the exception of the Chorus, where a “variety of lyric forms” were used (Garnier 22). To maintain the rhyme scheme, Garnier was compelled to use scattered word order, so disconnected occasionally that one was left searching for the verb and its subject or vice-versa. Additionally, the agreement of verb and subject was frequently due to “proximity rather than logic,” which aggravated this problem further.

Within Act V, my portion of the text, finding the *mot juste* in English was frequently complicated by specialized vocabulary. Throughout the act, many words relating to horses and their actions were used, requiring additional research on the appropriate terminology.

Working in a group under the guidance and supervision of our thesis advisor, Dr. Donald Gilman, was the single greatest help in overcoming the difficulties in translating *Hippolyte*. Our group environment provided us with daily opportunities to corroborate on difficult passages and to tackle elusive words.

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HIPPOLYTE

By Robert Garnier
Translation by Wesley Scott

MESSAGER

O la triste adventure! O le malheureux sort!
O desastre! ô mechef ! ô déplorable mort!

THESEE

Il parle d'Hippolyte. O Dieu, je te rends grace;
Je voy bien que ma voix a eu de l'efficace.

MESSAGER

Las ! ne m'avoit assez malheureé le destin,
D'avoir veu de mes yeux si pitoyable fin,
Sans qu'il me faille encore (ô Fortune cruelle!)
Sans qu'il me faille encore en porter la nouvelle?

THESEE

Ne crain point, Messenger, je veux sçavoir comment
Ce mal est advenu; conte-le hardiment.

MESSAGER

Le parler me défaut, et quand je m'y essaye,
Ma langue lors muette en ma bouche begaye.

THESEE

Pren courage, et me dy sans ton ame troubler,
Quel desastre nouveau vient mon mal redoubler.

MESSAGER

Hippolyte (ô regret !) vient de perdre la vie.

THESEE

MESSENGER

Oh sad circumstances! oh unfortunate destiny!
Oh disaster! oh misfortune! oh lamentable death!

THESEUS

He is speaking about Hippolytus. Oh God¹, I offer you
My thanks; I see that my prayer was heard.

MESSENGER

Alas, has destiny not distressed me enough,
By witnessing with my own eyes so pitiful an end,
Without having to behold it once more (oh cruel Fortune!)
Without compelling me once again to bear the news?

THESEUS

Fear not, Messenger, I wish to know how
This woe has come about; relate the tale forthrightly.

MESSENGER

I cannot speak about it, and when I try,
My tongue stutters silently in my mouth.

THESEUS

Take courage, and without troubling your spirit, tell me
What recent tragedy comes to intensify my woes.

MESSENGER

Hippolytus (oh regrettably!) has just lost his life.

THESEUS

J'estoy bien assuré qu'ell' luy seroit ravie,
Comme il m'avoit ravy ma femme, ses amours.
Mais nonobstant, fay moy de sa mort le discours.

MESSAGER

Si tost qu'il fut sorti de la ville fort blesme
Et qu'il eut attelez ses limonniers luy-mesme,
Il monte dans le char, et de la droite main
Leve le fouet sonnante, de l'autre le frein.
Les chevaux sonne-pieds d'une course esgalee
Vont galloper au bord de la plain salee;
La poussiere s'esleve, et le char balance
Vole dessus l'essieu comme un trait eslançé.

Il se tourne trois fois vers la Cité fuyante,
Detestant coleré sa luxure mechante,
Sa fraude et trahison, jurant ciel, terre et mer
Estre innocent du mal dont on le vient blâmer.

Il vous nomme souvent, priant les Dieux celestes
Que les torts qu'on luy fait deviennent manifestes,
Et que la verité vous soit cogneuë, à fin
Que vous donniez le blasme au coupable à la fin:
Quand voicy que la mer soudainement enflee,
Sans se voir d'aucun vent comme autrefois soufflee,
Mais calme et sommeilleuse, et sans qu'un seul flot d'eau
Se pourmenant mutin luy fist rider la peau,
Se hausse jusqu'au ciel, se dresse montagneuse
Tirant tousjours plus grosse à la rive areneuse.
Jamais le froid Boree armé contre le Nort,
Et le Nort contre luy, ne l'enflerent si fort,

I was indeed assured that his life would be ripped from him,
As he had torn my wife away from me, and her affection.
Nonetheless, tell me the details of his death.

MESSENGER

As soon as he had left the city, extremely pale,
And had by his own hand harnessed his stags,
He mounts his chariot, and with his right hand
Cracks the whip, and with his other hoists the bridle.
The horses cantering at an equal pace
Gallop off toward the edge of the coast;
Dust is kicked up, and the swaying chariot
Races forth like a hurled bolt atop its axle.

He turns his eyes thrice toward the city receding
In the distance, violently despising its wicked hedonism,
Its deceit and betrayal, swearing to the sky, earth and sea
That he is innocent of the evil for which he is blamed.

He names you often, praying to the celestial Gods
That the wrongs done to him may become publicly known,
And that the truth may be revealed to you,
So that in the end you blame the guilty:
When behold the sea suddenly swelled—
Without a single gust as before,
Still calm and tranquil, and without a single wave—
Stirring up and down, rippling its surface,
Now it surges toward the sky, towering like a mountain,
Drawing ever closer to the sandy bank.
Even cold Boreas² armed against Notus³
And Notus against him, never stirred the sea so violently,

Bien qu'ils la troublent toute, et que de la grand' rage
Qu'ils vont boursoufflant tremble tout le rivage,
Que Leucate en gemisse, et que les rocs esmeus
Blanchissent tempestez d'orages escumeux.

Cette grand' charge d'eau seulement n'espouvante
Les vaisseaux marinières, mais la terre pesante;
Elle s'en vient roulant à grands bonds vers le bord,
Qui fremist de frayeur d'un si vagueux abord;
Nous restons esperdus, redoutant la venue
Et la moitte fureur de ceste ondeuse nuë,
Quand nous voyons paroistre ainsi qu'un grand rocher,
Qui se va sourcilleux dans les astres cacher,
La teste avec le col d'un monstre si horrible,
Que pour la seule horreur il seroit incredible.

Il nage à grand' secousse, et la vague qu'il fend,
Bouillonnant dans le ciel, comme foudre descend;
L'eau se creuse au dessous en une large fosse,
Et de flots recourbez tout alentour se bosse;
Elle boust, elle escume, et suit en mugissant
Ce monstre, qui se va sur le bord eslançant.

THESEE

Quelle figure avoit ce monstre si enorme?

MESSAGER

Il avoit d'un Taureau la redoutable forme,
De couleur azuré; son col estoit couvert
Jusques au bas du front d'une hure à poil vert;
Son oreille estoit droite, et ses deux cornes dures
Longues se bigarroyent de diverses peintures;

Even though they agitate the whole sea, and fiercely raging
Their gusts rattle the whole coast,
And the city Leucate⁴ moans from this, and the stirred rocks
Are bleached by the frothy, raging storms.

This great deluge of water alone does not frighten
The mariner's vessel, but rather the heavy Earth;
It comes rolling, bounding toward the coast,
Which trembles with fear from such an approaching breaker
We remain overwhelmed, dreading its arrival
And the sopping frenzy of this bleak torrent,
When we see the head with the neck of such a terrifying
Monster, just like that of a great boulder,
Which, haughty, goes on to hide within the stars,
This horror alone would be, by itself, incredible.

It swims with mighty strokes, and the wave that it cleaves
Seethes in the sky like falling bolts of lightning;
The water below widens into a broad pit,
And the displaced water builds up all around the rift.
The sea churns, foams, and thundering, follows
This monster, which charges toward the shore.

THESEUS

What shape did this enormous monster have ?

MESSENGER

It had the fearful form of a bull,
Colored with azure; its neck was covered
Up to the base of its forehead with green hair
Its ears stood erect, and its two long, hard horns
Were multicolored with various spots;

Ses yeux estinceloient; le feu de ses naseaux
 Sortoit en respirant comme de deux fourneaux;
 Son estomas espois luy herissoit de mousse,
 Il avoit aux costez une grand' tache rousse;
 Depuis son large col qu'il eslevoit crineux,
 Il monstroît tout le dos doublement espineux.
 Il avoit au derriere une monstreuse taille,
 Qui s'armoit jusqu'au bas d'une pierreuse escaille.
 Le rivage trembla, les rochers, qui n'ont peur
 Du feu de Jupiter, en fremirent au cœur;
 Les troupeaux expandus laisserent les campagnes,
 Le berger palissant s'enfuit dans les montagnes,
 Le chasseur effroyé quitta cordes et rets,
 Et courut se tapir dans le sein des forests,
 Sans doute des Sangliers ny des Ours, car la crainte
 Du monstre a dans leur cœur toute autre peur esteinte.
 Seule demeure Hippolyte, à qui la peur n'estreint
 L'estomac de froideur, et le front ne destoint.
 Il tient haute la face, et grave d'assurance,
 'De mon père, dist-il, c'est l'heur et la vaillance
 D'affronter les Taureaux; je veux en l'imitant
 Aller à coup de main cettuy-cy combatant.'

Il empoigne un espieu (car pour lors d'avanture
 Le bon heros n'estoit équipé d'autre armure)
 Et le veut aborder, mais ses chevaux craintifs
 S'acculent en arriere, et retournant retifs
 Son char, malgré sa force et adroite conduite,
 Tout pantelans d'effroy se jetterent en fuite.

Its eyes gleamed; while it was breathing,
 Fire issued from its nostrils as if from two furnaces;
 Its thick stomach bristled with foam,
 On its side it had a prominent red mark;
 From its wide, shaggy neck that was rearing up,
 It unveiled its entire thorny spine.
 It had a monstrous tail on its back,
 Which was armed with a rocky scale at its tip.
 The shore quaked, the rocks, which do not fear
 The wrath of Jupiter, shuddered to their core;
 The scattered herds deserted the countryside,
 The shepherd, growing pale, fled into the mountains,
 The terrified hunter abandoned his nets and traps,
 And ran to the heart of the forest to hide therein,
 Without concern for boars and bears, for the fear
 Of a monster extinguished all other fears in their hearts.
 Only Hippolytus remains, whose steeled stomach
 Is not constricted by fear, and his brow does not change color.
 He holds his head high, and with grave assurance declares
 'For my father, he said, it is time and I have the courage
 To face the bulls; as my father did, I want to go and
 Fight this monster right now.'

He grasps his spear (for a good hero
 Would be armed with no other weapon during such a venture)
 And he wants to approach the fiend, but his timid horses
 Fall behind, and stubbornly turn his chariot around,
 Despite his strength and skillful handling,
 They lunged back into retreat, panting with fright.

Ce Taureau furieux court après plus léger
Qu'un tourbillon de vent, quand il vient saccager
L'espoir du laboureur, que les espis il veautre
Pesle-mesle couchez dans le champ l'un sur l'autre.

Il les suit, les devance, et dans un chemin creux
Fermé de grands rochers se retourne contre eux,
Fait sonner son escaille, et roüant en la teste
Ses grands yeux enflambez, annonce la tempeste.

Comme quand en esté le ciel se courrouçant
Noircist, esclaire, bruit, les hommes menaçant,
Le pauvre vigneron presagist par tels signes,
S'outrageant l'estomac, le malheur de ses vignes.
Aussi tost vient la gresle ainsi que drageons blancs
Batre le saint Bacchus à la teste et aus flancs;
Le martelle de coups, et boutonne la terre
De ses petits raisins enviez du tonnerre.
Ainsi faisoit ce monstre, apprestant contre nous
En son cœur enfielé la rage et le courroux.
Il s'irrite soyemesme, et de sa queue entorce
Se battant les costez, se colere par force.
Comme un jeune Taureau, qui bien loing dans un val
Voit jaloux sa genice avecque son rival
Errer parmy la plaine, incontinent il beugle
Forcenant contre luy d'une fureur aveugle.
Mais premier que le joindre il s'essaye au combat,
Luitte contre le vent, se fasche, se debat,
Pousse du pied l'arene, et dedans une souche
Ses cornes enfonçant, luy mesme s'écarmouche.

The enraged Bull gives chase
Faster than a whirlwind coming to ruin the hope of laborers
Which is the harvest that he spreads
All in a heap lying in the field on top of each other.
It follows them, outstrips them, and in a narrow pass
Enclosed with giant boulders it turns toward them,
Makes its scales clatter, and with its huge, burning eyes
Spinning about in its head, it heralds a storm.

As in the summer, the sky grows dark, flashes,
And thunders as it stirs, threatening men;
The poor winegrower with a knotted stomach might predict
Through such signs the misfortune of his vines.
Immediately the hail starts, as the white sprigs
Beat holy Bacchus⁵ on his head and sides;
It hammers with blows punctuated by thunder,
And rips the little grapes out of the land.
Thus went this monster, readying for us
Anger and wrath in its bitter heart.
It became annoyed, and with its crooked tail
Thrashing against its sides, becomes enraged by sheer force
Like a young bull, who far away in a valley
Jealously catches sight of its mate roaming through the plain
With its rival, and suddenly bellows
With a blind rage, being frenzied against its rival.
But rather than join them, it tries its hand at combat,
Fights in vain, it becomes enraged, struggles,
Kicks up sand with its hoof, and it buries its horns
In a tree stump, bickering with itself.

Lors le peux Hippolyt, qui avecques le fouët,
 Avecques la parolle les resnes avoit
 Retenu ses chevaux, comme un sçavant Pilote
 Retient contre le vent son navire qui flotte,
 Ne sçauroit plus qu'y faire; il n'y a si bon frain,
 Bride, resne ny voix qui modere leur train.
 La frayeur les maistrise, et quoy qu'il s'evertue,
 Il ne leur peut oster cette crainte testue.
 Ils se dressent à mont, et de trop grand effort
 L'escume avec le sang de la bouche leur sort.
 Ils soufflent des naseaux et n'ont aucune veine,
 Nerve ny muscle sur eux qui ne tende de peine.
 Comme à les arrester il se travaille ainsi,
 Et qu'eux à reculer se travaillent aussi,
 Voicy venir le Monstre, et à l'heure et à l'heure
 Les chevaux esperdus rompent toute demeure;
 S'eslançant de travers, grimpent au roc pierreux,
 Pensant tousjours l'avoir en suite derriere eux.
 Hippolyte au contraire essaye à toute force
 D'arrester leur carriere, et en vain s'y efforce;
 Il se penche la teste, et, à force de reins,
 Tire vers luy la bride avecques les deux mains.
 La face luy degoute. Eux, que la crainte presse,
 Au lieu du s'arrester redoublent leur vitesse,
 Il est contraint de cheoir, et de malheur advient
 Qu'une longue lanier en tombant le retient;
 Il demeure empestré, le neud tousjours se serre
 Et les chevaux ardans le trainent contre terre

When the valiant Hippolytus, who had kept hold
 Of the reins of his horses with a whip
 And strong words, as a sage captain
 Keeps his ship afloat against the wind,
 No longer knows what to do; there is neither so good a brake
 Bridle, rein nor command that can reduce their pace.
 Fear controls them, and no matter what he tries,
 He cannot remove this obstinate fear.
 They stand on end, and with too great an effort
 Blood-stained froth escapes their mouths.
 They breathe through their nostrils and every vein,
 Nerve, and muscle in their body tightens with pain.
 As he thus strives to stop them,
 And they also endure to hold back,
 The monster approaches, and at that very instant,
 The crazed horses break out of their place;
 They careen in all directions, clamber up the jagged rocks,
 Constantly thinking of their pursuer.
 Hippolytus, on the other hand, tries with all his might
 To halt their course, but his actions are in vain;
 He bends his head down, and, with the reins,
 Wrenches the bridle toward himself with both hands.
 The situation is repulsive to him. Pressed on by fear,
 The horses charge forward again rather than slow down.
 Hippolytus is thrust to the ground, and by misfortune
 A long leather strap snags him as he falls; he remains
 Entangled by the strap, the knot constantly tightening
 And the fevered horses drag him across the ground

A travers les halliers et les buissons touffus,
Qui le vont deschairant avec leurs doigts griffus;
La teste luy bondist et ressaute sanglante,
De ses membres saigneux la terre est rougissante,
Comme on voit un limas qui rampe aventureux
Le long d'un sep tortu laisser un trac glaireux.
Son estomac, ouvert d'un tronc pointu, se vuide
De ses boyaux traitez sous le char homicide;
Sa belle ame le laisse, et va conter là bas,
Passant le fleuve noir, son angoisseux trespas.
De ses yeux etherez la luisante prunelle
Morte se va couvrant d'une nuit eternelle.

Nous, que la peur avoit dès la commencement
Separez loing de luy, accourons vistement
Où le sang nous guidait d'une vermeille trace,
Et là nous arrivons à l'heure qu'il trespasse.
Car les liens de cuir, qui le serroyent si fort,
Rompirent d'avanture, usez de trop d'effort,
Et le laisserent prest de terminer sa peine,
Qu'il retenoit encore avec un peu d'haleine.

Ses chiens autour de luy piteusement hurlans
Se monstroyent du malheur de leur maistre dolens.
Nous qui l'avons servi, nous jettons contre terre,
Nous deschirons la face, et chacun d'une pierre
Nous plombons la poitrine, et de cris esclatans,
Palles et deformez, l'allons tous lamentans.
Les uns luy vont baisant les jambes desja roides,
Les autres l'estomac, les autres ses mains froides;

Through dense brush and thorny thickets,
Which scratch and tear at his body with their barbed limbs.
His bloodied head is tossed and jerked,
As the ground is reddened with the blood of his limbs,
Like a snail that adventurously inches up
The stalk of a twisted vine and leaves behind a slimy trail.
From his stomach, eviscerated by a sharp trunk, his intestines
Spill out as he is dragged beneath the murderous chariot;
His beautiful soul departs his body and goes to be
Counted below, crossing the dark river, his anguished death.
The glistening pupils of his vacant eyes, now dead,
Start to glaze over with eternal night.

We, who, from the beginning, had been separated
From him by fear, hurriedly follow
Where the blood was leading with a crimson trail,
And then we reach him at the hour of his death.
For the leather straps, which constricted him so tightly,
Fortunately snapped, overused by too much strain,
And left him, ready to end his suffering,
Which he clung to by a single breath.

Around him, his dogs howling woefully
Show distress of their master's suffering.
We, his servants, throw ourselves to the ground,
Clawing at our faces, and each of us, with a stone,
Pound our chests, and with crying outbursts,
We, pale and deformed, all lament his death.
Some kiss his legs, already stiff with death,
Others, his stomach, and still others, his cold hands;

Nous luy disons adieu, maudissant le destin,
Le char, les limonniers et le monstre marin,
Causes de son malheur: puis dessus nos espauls
L'apportons veuf de vie estendu sur des gaules.

Or je me suis hasté pour vous venir conter
Ce piteux accident, qu'il vous convient domter.

THESEE

J'ay pitié de son mal, bien qu'un cruel supplice
Ne soit digne vengeance à si grand malefice.

MESSAGER

Si vous avez voulu qu'il mourust, et pourquoy
De sa mort poursuivie avez-vous de l'esmy?

THESEE

Je ne suis pas dolent qu'il ait perdu la vie,
Mais seulement dequoy je la luy ay ravie.

MESSAGER

Dequoy sert vostre dueil? Soit bien fait, ou mal fait,
Il ne peut desormais qu'il ne demeure fait.
Prenez donc patience, et faites qu'on luy dresse
La pompe d'un tombeau digne de sa noblesse.

PHEDRE

O malheureuse Royne entre celles qui sont
Regorgeant de malheurs par tout ce monde rond!
O mechante homicide! ô detestable femme!
O cruelle! ô traistresse! ô adulateur infame!

THESEE

Quelle nouvelle rage entre en vous maintenant?
Pour quel nouveau desastre allez-vous forcenant?

We say our farewells, cursing destiny,
The chariot, the horses, and Neptune's monster,
All causes of his misfortune: then, on our shoulders,
We carry him, bereft of life, and outstretched on supports.

And yet, I came swiftly to relate to you
This pitiful accident, which fittingly restrains you.

THESEUS

I pity his ill-fated end, even though a cruel prayer
Is not a worthy retribution for so great an offense.

MESSENGER

If you wanted him to die, then why
Do you have any feeling about his death that you sought?

THESEUS

I am not sorrowful that he has lost his life,
But only the means by which I took it from him.

MESSENGER

What good does your mourning serve? Whether true or not,
From now on, it can only be that the deed remains done.
Therefore, be patient, and arrange that the magnificence
Of a tomb worthy of his nobility be erected.

PHAEDRE

Oh unfortunate Queen among those who are
Overwhelmed with misfortunes throughout this world!
Oh wicked murderess! Oh detestable woman!
Oh cruel one! Oh betrayer! Oh infamous adulteress!

THESEUS

What new madness takes hold of you now?
What new disaster do you eagerly seek?

Dites, ma douce Amie, avez-vous reçu ores
Quelque nouvel ennuy, que je poursuiue encores?

PHEDRE

O credule Thesee, et par mon faux rapport
Faict coupable du sang de ce pauvre homme mort!
Apprenez de ne croire aux plaintes sanguinaires
Que vous font mechamment vos femmes adulteres.

Hippolyte, Hippolyte, hélas! Je romps le cours,
Par une ardante amour, de vos pudiques jours.
Pardonnez-moy, ma vie, et sous la sepulture
N'enfermez indigné cette implacable injure;
Je suis vostre homicide, Hippolyte, je suis
Celle qui vous enferme aux infernales nuits;
Mais de mon sang lascif je vay purger l'offense
Que j'ay commise à tort contre vostre innocence.
O Terre! crève toy, crève toy, fends ton sein,
Et m'englouti cruelle en un gouffre inhumain.
Et toy, porte-trident, Neptune, Roy des ondes,
Que n'as-tu dechainné tes troupes vagabondes
Contre mon traistre chef, plustost que par un vœu
Faict d'un homme credule occire ton nepveu?
Je suis seule coupable, et suis la malheureuse
Qui t'ay faict despouiller cette ame vertueuse.
Que pleust aux justes Dieux, que jamais du Soleil
Naissant je n'eusse veu le visage vermeil!
Ou si je l'eusse veu, qu'une rousse Lionne
M'eust petit engloutie en sa gorge felonne.
A fin que devoree en cet âge innocent,

Speak, my beloved, have you now received
Some new ache that I continue to seek.

PHAEDRE

Oh credulous Theseus, and by my false accusation
I am to blame for the blood of this poor, dead man!
Learn not to believe bloodthirsty complaints
That your adulterous wives utter against you.

Hippolytus, Hippolytus, alas! I break the course
Of your untainted days with a burning love.
Forgive me, my reason for living, and do not wrathfully
Entomb this unforgivable affront beneath the sepulcher;
I am your murderer, Hippolytus, I am
The one who imprisons you in the infernal darkness;
But with my lustful blood I am going to purge the offense
That I wrongly committed against your innocence.
Oh Earth! break apart, break apart, rend your heart,
And consume me, the cruel one, in an monstrous chasm.
And you, Neptune, King of the waves, carrier of the trident,
Why did you not unleash your wandering troops
On my traitorous head, rather than unleash them
To slay your nephew because of the prayer of a gullible man?
I alone am to blame, and I am the wretch
Who has made you despoil this virtuous soul.
May it please the just Gods that I had never
Seen the crimson face of the morning sun!
Or if I had seen it, that a tawny lioness
Would have swallowed me piece by piece in its cruel throat
So that having been devoured in my innocent age,

Je ne fusse aujourd'huy ce beau corps meurtrissant!

O moy pire cent fois que ce Monstre, mon frere,
Ce monstre Homme-toreau, deshonneur de ma mere!
Thesé s'en peut garder, mais de mon cœur malin
Vous n'avez, Hippolyte, évité le venin.
Les bestes des forests, tant fussent-elles fieres,
Les Sangliers, les Lions, les Ourses montagneres
N'ont peu vous offenser, et moy d'un parler feint
Irritant vostre père ay vostre jour esteint.

Las! où est ce beau front? où est ce beau visage,
Ces beaux yeux martyrans, nostre commun dommage?
Où est ce teint d'albâtre, où est ce brave port,
Helas! hélas! où sont ces beautez, nostre mort?
Ce n'est plus vous, mon cœur, ce n'est plus Hippolyte:
Las! avecques sa vie est sa beauté destruite.

Or recevez mes pleurs, et n'allez reboutant
La chaste affection de mon cœur repentant;
Recevez mes soupirs, et souffrez que je touche
De ce dernier baiser à vostre tendre bouche.

Belle ame, si encor vous habitez ce corps,
Et que tout sentiment n'ayez tiré dehors,
S'il y demeure encor de vous quelque partie,
Si vous n'êtes encor de luy toute partie;
Je vous prie, ombre sainte, avec genous pliez,
Les bras croisez sur vous, mes fautes oubliez.
Je n'ay point de regret de ce que je trespasse,
Mais dequoy tressassant je n'ay pas vostre grace:
La mort m'est agreable, et me plaist de mourir.

I would not be today this beautiful, murderous being!

Oh my, hundred times worse than this monster, my brother!
This half-man, half-bull monster, disgrace of my mother⁶!
Theseus can defend himself, but Hippolytus,
You have not avoided the poison of my malicious heart.
The beasts of the forest, however proud they may be,
The mountain-dwelling boars, lions, and bears
Could not harm you; and yet I extinguished your life
With feigned words that angered your father.

Alas! Where is that handsome brow? That handsome face
Those beautiful, tormented eyes, our common affliction?
Where is that white complexion, where is that brave
Demeanor? Alas! Alas! Where are those beauties, our death?
It is no longer you, my beloved; it is no longer Hippolytus:
Alas! his handsomeness is destroyed along with his life.

Now accept my tears, and do not dismiss
The pure affection of my repenting heart;
Accept my sighs, and bear that I kiss
Your tender lips one last time.

Dear soul, if you still reside in this body,
And if you have not ripped out every feeling,
If there still remains some part of you,
If you have not completely left this body;
I beg of you, holy spirit, on bent knees,
My arms laid upon you, to forget my mistakes.
I do not regret at all that I am dying,
But that in dying, I do not have your forgiveness:
Death is fitting for me, and it pleases me to die.

Las! et que puis-je moins qu'ore à la mort courir,

Ayant perdu ma vie, et l'ayant, malheureuse,

Perdue par ma faute en ardeur amoureuse ?

5 Le destin envieux et cruel n'a permis

Que nous puissions vivans nous embrasser amis:

Las! qu'il permette aumoins que de nos ames vuides

Nos corps se puissent joindre aux sepulchres humides.

Ne me refusez point, Hippolyte, je veux

0 Amortir de mon sang mes impudiques feux.

Mes propos ne sont plus d'amoureuse destresse,

Je n'ay rien de lascif qui vostre ame reblesse;

Oyez-moy hardiment, je veux vous requerrir

Pardon de mon mesfait, devant que de mourir.

5 O la plus belle vie, et plus noble de celles

Qui pendent aux fuseux des fatales Pucelles!

O digne, non de vivre en ce rond vicieux,

Mais au ciel nouvel astre entre les demy-Dieux!

Las! vous estes esteinte, ô belle et chere vie,

0 Et plustost qu'il ne faut vous nous estes ravie!

Comme une belle fleur, qui ne faisant encor

Qu'entr'ouvrir à demy son odoreux thresor,

Atteinte d'une gresle à bas tombe fanie

Devant que d'estaller sa richesse espanie.

5 Or sus, flambante espee, or sus, appreste toy,

Fidelle à ton seigneur, de te venger de moy:

Plonge toy, trempe-toy jusques à la pommelle

Dans mon sang, le repas de mon ame bourrelle.

Mon cœur, que trembles-tu? quelle soudaine horreur,

Alas! What less can I do than to desire now a speedy death,

Having lost my reason for living, and miserably,

Having lost it through my fault of excessive passion?

Cruel and envious destiny did not allow us

To embrace each other alive as lovers.

Alas! May destiny at least allow our soulless bodies

To be joined in our musty tombs.

Do not refuse me, Hippolytus, I want

To extinguish my wanton passion with my blood.

My words no longer stem from an anguishing love,

I have nothing lascivious that wounds your soul again;

Hear me out, I want to request from you

Pardon for my misdeeds before I die.

Oh the most beautiful life, and most noble of these

Which hang by the thread of the Fates⁷!

Oh Hippolytus, one worthy not of living in this sinful world

But rather in the new starry sky among the demigods!

Alas! you are extinguished, oh beautiful and dear life,

And rather than it be necessary for you to be torn from us!

Like a lovely flower, which has only

Partially opened its aromatic treasure,

Struck down by hail, it falls withered

Before displaying its wealth in full bloom.

Well then, flaming sword, well then, prepare yourself,

Faithful to your master, to avenge yourself with my blood:

Plunge, soak yourself up to the hilt

In my blood, the nourishment of my tortured soul.

My heart, why do you tremble? What sudden fear,

Quelle horreur frissonnant allentist ta fureur?
 Quelle affreuse Megere à mes yeux se presente?
 Quels serpens encordez, quelle torche flambante?
 Quelle rive escumeuse, et quel fleuve grondant,
 Quelle rouge fournaise horriblement ardent?
 Ha! ce sont les Enfers, ce les sont, ils m'attendent,
 Et pour me recevoir leurs cavernes ils fendent.
 Adieu, Soleil luisant, Soleil luisant, adieu!
 Adieu, triste Thesee! adieu, funebre lieu.
 Il est temps de mourir, sus, que mon sang ondoie
 Sur ce corps trespasé, courant d'une grand' playe.

CHŒUR

Faisons, ô mes compagnes,
 Retenir les montagnes
 Et les rochers secrets
 De nos regrets
 Que la mer, qui arrive
 Vagueuse à nostre rive
 Face rider les flots
 De nos sanglots.
 Que les larmes roulants
 De nos faces dolents,
 Des sablonneux ruisseaux
 Enflent les eaux.
 Et toy, Soleil, lumiere
 Du monde journaliere,
 Cache ton œil honteux
 D'un ciel nuiteux.

What quaking fear allays your fury?
 What horrible Megaera⁸ appears before my eyes?
 What ensnaring serpents, what burning torch?
 What frothy coast, and what roaring river,
 What red furnace, blazing horribly?
 Ha! it is Hell, that is it, Hell is waiting for me,
 And it splits its chasms open to receive me.
 Farewell, shining sun, shining sun, farewell!
 Farewell, sad Theseus, farewell, gloomy land.
 It is time for me to die, now, may my blood
 Flow over this dead body, gushing from a deep wound.

CHORUS

O my friends, let us make
 The mountains
 And the hidden rocks
 Keep our regrets.
 Let us make the sea,
 Whose waves reach our shore,
 Ripple the currents
 With our sobs.
 Let us make the tears streaming
 From our grieving faces,
 Overflow the waters
 Of sandy brooks.
 And you, the Sun, the light
 Of the daily world,
 Hide your shameful eye
 With the night sky.

Nos fortunes funebres

Se plaisent aux tenebres

Commodos sont les nuits

A nos ennuis.

Dequoy plus nostre vie

Sçauroit avoir envie

En ce funeste dueil

Que du cercueil?

Ville Mopsopienne,

Ta grandeur ancienne

Sent du sort inhumain

La dure main.

Jupiter, nostre père,

Jamais de main severe

Ne combla tant Cité

D'adversité.

Or ces corps, dont la Parque

L'ame et la vie embarque,

Honorons de nos pleurs

Au lieu de fleurs.

Les pleurs doivent sans cesse,

Tombant en pluye espesse,

Témoigner la langueur

De nostre cœur.

Plombons nostre poitrine

D'une dextre mutine,

Et nous faisons de coups

L'estomac roux.

May our gloomy fortunes

Please the shadows

Fitting are the nights

For our dismay.

What more would our life

Know to desire

Than the grave

In our grief and mourning?

Athens,

Your ancient grandeur

Reeks of cruel fate

Your heavy hand.

Jupiter, our father,

Never with a harsh hand

Did he fill so many cities

With adversity.

And yet those bodies, whose

Soul and life the Parcae⁹ take,

Let us honor them with our tears

Instead of flowers.

Our tears, falling like heavy rain

Must constantly

Bear witness to the feebleness

Of our heart.

Lets us strike our chest

With a defiant right hand,

And let us deliver blows

To our bloody stomach.

Que sçaurions-nous mieux faire,

Voyant le ciel contraire

Ruer tant de mechef

Sur nostre chef?

THESEE

O Ciel! ô Terre mere! ô profonde caverne

Des Démons ensoulfrez, inevitable Averno!

O Rages! ô Fureurs! ô Dires, les esbats

Des coupables esprits, qui devalent là bas!

Erebe, Phlegethon, et toy, pleureux Cocyte,

Qui te traines errant d'une bourbeuse suite;

Vous, Serpens, vous, Dragons, vous Pestes, et vous tous

Implacables bourreaux de l'infernal courroux,

Navrez, battez, bruslez mon ame criminelle

De fer, de foüets sonnans et de flamme eternelle.

J'ay, mechant parricide, aveuglé de fureuer,

Faict un mal dont l'enfer auroit mesmes horreur.

J'ay meutry mon enfant, mon cher enfant (ô blasmae!)

O pere miserable! ô pere malheureux!

O pere infortuné, chetif et languoureux!

Hé! hé! que fay-je au monde? et que sous moy la terre

Ne se fend, et tout vif en ses flancs ne m'enserre?

Peut bien le ciel encore, et ses hostes, les Dieux,

Me souffrir regarder le Soleil radieux?

Peut bien le Dieu tonnant, le grand Dieu qui nous lance

La foudre et les esclairs, me laisser sans vengeance?

Las! que ne suis-je encore où j'estois, aux enfers,

Enfermé pieds et mains d'insupportables fers?

What more could we do,

Seeing the sky convulsed

Stirring so much ill will

Upon our head?

THESEUS

Oh Heavens! Oh Mother Earth! Oh bottomless chasm

Filled with sulphurous demons, unavoidable Avernus¹⁰!

Oh Furies¹¹! Oh Erinyes¹²! Oh Diræ¹³, the distractions

Of guilty minds, which are thrown down below!

Erebus¹⁴, Phlegethon¹⁵, and you, weeping Cocytus¹⁶,

Who trudges, straying from a muddied bank;

You, Serpents, you, Dragons, you, Plagues, and all of you

Implacable executioners of hellish wrath,

Wound, batter, and burn my guilty soul

With iron, cracking whips, and eternal fire.

Blinded by rage, I, a wretched parricide, have committed

An evil, of which even Hell would be horrified.

I have murdered my child, my dear child (oh the blame!)

Oh miserable father! Oh wretched father!

Oh unfortunate, deplorable, languishing father!

Hey, hey¹⁷! what have I done to the world? What if the earth

Beneath me splits open, and swallows me alive in its hollow

Can the sky and its hosts, the Gods,

Still tolerate me to see once again the radiant sun?

Can the thunderous God, the great God who hurls

Lightning and sparks, let me go without punishment?

Alas! Were I again where I was, in Hell,

My feet and hands bound by intolerable chains?

Et pourquoy de Pluton m'as-tu recous, Alcide,
 Pour rentrer, plus coupable, au creux Acherontide?
 Eac', ne te tourmente, encores que je sois
 Eschapé de ta geole, où vif je languissois,
 Je porte mon martyre, et pour changer de place
 Je n'ay changé mon dueil, qui me suit à la trace.
 Je suis comblé d'angoisse, et croy que tout le mal
 Des esprits condamnez n'est pas au mien egal.
 Puis je vay redescendre, attrainant dans l'abysme
 Ma femme et mon enfant, devalez par mon crime:
 Je meine ma maison, que j'estois tout exprés
 Venu precipiter, pour trebucher après.
 Sus, que tardes-tu donc? une crainte couarde
 Te rend elle plus mol que ta femme paillarde?
 Craindras-tu de t'ouvrir d'une dague le flanc?
 Craindras-tu de vomir une mare de sang,
 Où tu laves ta coulpe, et l'obsequé tu payes
 Au corps froid d'Hippolyte, et rechauffes ses playes?
 Non, tu ne dois mourir: non, non, tu ne dois pas
 Expier ton forfait par un simple trespas.
 Mais si, tu dois mourir, à fin que tu endures
 Plustost sous les Enfers tes miseres futures.
 Non, tu ne dois mourir: car peut estre estant mort,
 Ton beau père Minos excuseroit ton tort,
 Et sans peine et destresse irois de ton offence
 Boire en l'oublieux fleuve une longue oubliance.
 Il vaut donc mieux survivre, il me vaut donques mieux
 Que je vive en langueur tant que voudront les Dieux.

And why did you, Alcides¹⁸, rescue me from Pluto¹⁹
 Only to return, even more guilty, to shallow Acheron²⁰?
 Aeacus²¹, do not torment yourself, when I escaped
 From your prison, where I was wasting away,
 I bear my torment, and to change places
 I did not overcome my grief, which follows my actions.
 I am filled with anguish, and I believe that all the evils
 Of the condemned spirits are not equal to mine.
 Then I will descend once more, dragging my wife
 And child into the abyss, consumed by my crime:
 I manage my household, which I had come intentionally
 To deal with, only to stumble after them.
 So, what delays you then? a cowardly fear
 Makes you softer than your lecherous wife?
 Will you fear to open your side with a dagger?
 Will you fear to vomit a pool of blood,
 Where you wash away your guilt, and you pay for the funeral
 With the cold body of Hippolytus, and aggravate his wound?
 No, you must not die: no, no, you must not
 Make amends for your crime with a simple death.
 But then yes, you must die, so that you endure
 Your future tortures in Hell instead.
 No, you must not die: for perhaps being dead,
 Your father-in-law would excuse your wrong,
 And without suffering and distress, you would drink
 From the river of forgetfulness to let your offense slip from
 Your mind. Thus, it is better to live, it is better for me
 To live in slow decay as long as the Gods desire.

Il vaut mieux que je vive, et repentant je pleure,
Je sanglotte et gémisse, et puis en fin je meure.

En quel roc caverneux, en quel antre escarté
(Que ne dore jamais la celeste clarté)
Porteray-je ma peine? en quel desert sauvage
Useray-je l'ennuy de mon sanglant veuvage?
Je veux choisir un lieu commode à mon tourment,
Où le mortel Hibou lamente incessamment;
Où n'arrive personne, où tousjours l'hiver dure,
Où jamais le Printemps ne sème sa verdure;
Que tout y soit funebre, horrible et furieux,
Et que tousjours mon mal se présente à mes yeux.
Là, pour sur moy venger, et sur le bleu Neptune,
Mon fils par nous meutry d'une faute commune.
Diane, puisses-tu faire sortir dehors
De tes bois un Lion qui derompe mon corps,
Et mes membres moulus cuise dans ses entrailles,
Indignes d'autre tombe et d'autres funeraillies.

Or adieu, mon enfant, que bien tost puisses-tu
Voir les champs Elysez, loyer de ta vertu.
Que puisse-tu bien tost dedans l'onde oublieuse
Ensevelir mon crime, et ta mort outrageuse.
Adieu, mon fils, adieu, je m'en vay langoureux
Consommer quelque part mon âge malheureux.

It is better for me to live, and in repentance, I weep,
I sob and I sigh, and, then, finally I die.

In what cavernous crag, in what isolated cave
(Which heavenly light never illuminates)
Will I carry my anguish? In what harsh desert
Will I wear out the pain of my bleeding solitude²²?
I want to choose a location befitting my torment,
Where the fatal Owl²³ forebodes my death endlessly;
Where no one ventures, where winter reigns eternally,
Where Spring never plants its greenery;
May everything be mournful, terrible, and maddening there
And that my woe is always before my eyes.
There, to take vengeance on myself, and on blue Neptune,
My son, murdered by us for an ordinary fault.
Diana²⁴, can you summon
Out of your forests, a lion to tear my body to pieces,
And to digest my broken limbs in its intestines,
Unworthy of any other tomb or procession.

Now goodbye, my child, may you soon see
The Elysian Fields²⁵, may you soon praise your virtue.
May you soon bury my crime in a forgetful wave
As well as your dishonorable death.
Farewell, my son, goodbye, I leave langourous to go
Elsewhere to be slowly consumed by my wretched years

Appendix A: Notes on the Translation

- Neptune
God of the North Wind
God of the South Wind
A French *commune* located in south-western France on the Mediterranean Sea.
The Roman God of wine and initiation
Phaedra's mother is Pasiphaë, mother of the Minotaur
Three goddesses that determined the destiny of mortals
One of the Furies, who were goddesses that punished mortals who had committed crimes
Roman word for the Fates
Alternate word for the Underworld
Goddesses that punished mortals who had committed crimes
= Furies
= Furies
Location in the Underworld
The river of flames in the Underworld
The river of forgetfulness in the Underworld
Theseus' sobs
Hercules
The Underworld
The river of pain in the Underworld
Aeacus was a mythical king of the island of Aegina. After his death, he became one of the three judges in Hell.
The French *veuvage* truly means "widowhood," but in this case "widowerhood" would be needed. *Solitude* was chosen instead as *widowerhood* seemed odd.
In Roman culture, seeing the owl during the day was viewed as an ominous sign
Goddess of the hunt and Hippolytus' patron goddess
A final resting place for the good in Roman and Greek culture

Appendix B:

Robert Garnier's *Hippolyte* and the Evolution of a Secondary Character

The well-known legend of Phaedra, the wife of Theseus, and her incestuous passion for her stepson, Hippolytus, was the “subject of three different tragedies in the fifth century B.C.”, one by Sophocles and two by Euripides (Sanderson 12). Sophocles’ *Phaedra* was lost to time and the *Hippolytus* of Euripides is believed to be the later of his two plays on the legend (Sanderson 12). Only fragments of the first remain, but these, along with comments on the play, have lead scholars to note one crucial difference: the character of Phaedra, who is portrayed as having abandoned her morality in pursuit of her sexual desire in his first rendering (Sanderson 12). Seneca’s version of the tragedy—written during his exile on Corsica between 41 and 49 A.D.—is “derived from the Attic model” (Sanderson 60) and, given his portrayal of Phaedra, is “nearer” the first, lost version of Euripides, which seemed to have “displeased the Athenians,” thereby prompting his second interpretation (Sanderson 12). Robert Garnier (1545-1590) drew his inspiration for his rendering, *Hippolyte*, from Seneca’s version. In fact, “most Renaissance playwrights preferred to use as their models the plays of Seneca,” (Garnier 6) primarily because his plays “mêlent la psychologie, la poésie et l’intention morale” (Darcos 105). Ancient tragedies were essentially “edited, translated, and imitated” (Garnier 5). It would be misleading, though, to label Garnier’s *Hippolyte* as “simply a translation” of the Senecan version (Garnier 11). Garnier’s Nurse is a prime example of his reworking of the underlying structure of the tragedy.

As a secondary character, the role of the Nurse is dependent on the protagonist, Phaedra. The role is essentially meant to be a catalytic agent that helps advance the plot, while

simultaneously providing meaningful dialogue for the psychological development of the major characters. Additionally, most secondary characters are static. Garnier's Nurse, however, is an exception in notable ways.

Taken as a whole, she and Seneca's Nurse function essentially the same. She serves as a confidant, a friend, and a mother-like figure to Phaedra, her charge. Garnier, however, applied a slight but noticeable Christian undertone to the character as well as the elements of Aristotelian Tragedy, *i.e.* hamartia, peripeteia, anagnorisis, and catharsis. Seneca's Nurse lacks both of these, and as a result, remains a static, secondary character; whereas Garnier's innovative approach to the Nurse expands her importance and makes her a dynamic role. Garnier's tragedies were also a reflection of the bloody *Guerres de Religion*, which ravaged France from 1560 to 1598 A.D.—an aspect obvious absent from the Senecan version. Garnier's plays portrayed “des choses funèbres et lamentables, en accord avec la réalité de son temps: luttes fratricides, épaisse horreur du monde, attente d'un Dieu qui ramènera la paix” (Darcos 107).

The Christian undertones interwoven into Garnier's Nurse bear witness to the “considerable experimentation in drama” in France during the sixteenth century, specifically with the Biblical tragedy (Garnier 4). Like other learned scholars, Garnier had “scruples about imitating too closely the works of pagan Greeks and Romans when treating a Biblical subject” (Garnier 5). Phaedra's incestuous love for Hippolytus, like that of “Potiphar's wife and her adulterous love for Joseph,” can be traced back to either the Egyptian *Tale of the Two Brothers*, dating from the 13th century BC, or to a “common Canaanite source” (Sanderson 6). Thus, Garnier, who was “catholique” (Darcos 107), sought to infuse the Nurse with a Christian touch to reconcile the opposing religious systems of Antiquity and Renaissance France. To effect this change, Garnier replaced the Senecan Nurse's initial argument against Phaedra's desire with one bearing not only

a religious tone but a stark Christian image: the snake. Seneca's Nurse drew her first argument from Phaedra's ancestry—the seemingly cursed line of Cretan women—and from the inviolable laws of nature:

Why dost heap thy house
With further infamy? Wouldst thou outsin
Thy mother? For thy impious love is worse
Than her unnatural and monstrous love. (*Phaedra* 170-174)

Expel from thy chaste soul this hideous thing,
And, mindful of thy mother's sin, avoid
Such monstrous unions. (*Phaedra* 208-210)

Shall nature's laws
Be scorned, whene'er a Cretan woman loves? (*Phaedra* 217-218)

She made a passionate plea for Phaedra to adhere to the laws of nature and to avoid the same disastrous fate suffered by her mother, Pasiphaë—the mother of the Minotaur. Garnier, on the other hand, removed this passage and crafted a new argument which simultaneously bridged the religious gap. He painted an ominous serpentine image:

Amour est un serpent, un serpent voirement,
Qui dedans nostre sein glisse si doucement
Qu'à peine le sent-on: mais si l'on ne prend garde
De luy boucher l'entrée, et tant soit peu l'on tarde,
Bien tost, privez d'espoir de tout guarison,
Nous aurons nostre sang infect de sa poison;
Et alors, (mais trop tard) cognoistrons nostre faute
D'avoir laissé entrer une beste si caute.

(*Hippolyte* 477-484)

Love is a serpent, truly a serpent,
Which glides so softly within our breast
That we hardly sense it: but if one does not take care
To bar its entry, and however little one delays,
We, soon deprived of the hope of any recovery,
Will have our blood infected with its poison:
And then (but too late) we will see our mistake
In having allowed so cunning a beast to enter.¹

This serpent image is unique to Garnier's version of the legend. For the Christian audience of his tragedy, it carried a weighty reminder. Moreover, it highlighted the dually ironic position of the Nurse, who had just learned of Phaedra's incestuous desire and who became an embodiment of the snake, poisoning the affairs of Phaedra. By extension, this passage foretells the fate of the

¹ Translated by Brigit Calder, 2010

Nurse and Phaedra—both destined to take their lives in the name of love. On the issue of love, Garnier’s Nurse also invoked the binding sanctity of marriage in her attempt to persuade Phaedra to suppress her desires, commenting that she must remain loyal to her “amour conjugale jusqu’au pied du tombeau”² (*Hippolyte* 644) and demonstrate “respect à vostre saint devoirs”³ (*Hippolyte* 598).

The second key difference in Garnier’s Nurse is his expansion of her tragic flaw. Aristotle’s tragic structure can easily be applied to the accepted main characters: Phaedra, Hippolytus, and Theseus. But, Garnier decided to complete the Nurse’s tragic cycle, by supplying the elements missing from both Euripides’ and Seneca’s versions: anagnorisis and catharsis. During the Nurse’s polemic, her goal is to persuade Phaedra to suppress and control her desires. When Phaedra declares, “Non, non, je veux mourir, la mort est mon repos”⁴ (*Hippolyte* 850), the Nurse is horrified—her argument has backfired. Phaedra has instead resolved herself to commit suicide to avoid staining her “fair fame” (*Phaedra* 312). Just as Seneca’s Nurse, Garnier’s becomes blinded by her tragic flaw: her mother-like bond with Phaedra, whom she has raised from her first breath. She abandons her cautious arguments and focuses solely on Phaedra’s survival, now willing to assist Phaedra with the fulfillment of her desire:

Rompez plutost la foy promise à vostre espous, Et plutost mesprisez le bruit du populaire, Mesprisez-le, mon cœur, plutost que vous mal faire.	Break the faith promised to your spouse instead, And scorn the noise of the populace instead, Scorn it, my beloved, rather than causing yourself harm ⁵ .
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(*Hippolyte* 866-868)

The Nurse’s sudden change of heart also reflects the moral inconsistency present in Garnier’s lifetime. Suicide was viewed as a sin, whereas it was an honorable death in Roman and Greek

² „conjugal love to the grave“

³ „Commitment to your sacred vows of marriage“

⁴ „No, no I want to die, death is my repose“

⁵ Translated by Brigit Calder, 2010

culture. The Nurse's rejection of Phaedra's suicidal design in Seneca's version was influenced by her tragic flaw alone, while the sinful nature of such an act, as designated by Christianity, is equally incorporated in Garnier's adaption: yet another attempt at bridging the gap between the opposing religious models.

As the tale goes, the Nurse's attempt at softening Hippolytus' abstemious demeanor and Phaedra's amorous overtures are both in vain—neither a match for Hippolytus' chaste and innocent life style. Unlike Euripides' version, where Phaedra, herself, accuses Hippolytus as her ravisher, Garnier kept with the Senecan tradition and had the Nurse frame the stepson, stating “par nouveau mesfaict, couvrons habilement celui qu'avons ja faict⁶” (*Hippolyte* 1495-1496). Theseus' unexpected return marks the crucial turning-point in the tragedy and the realization of the Nurse's peripeteia. In his absence, the Nurse's false accusation may have only lead to the exiling of Hippolytus, but now it will lead to murder. His arrival thus can be viewed as one of the tragic catalysts in the play: all the other elements were already in place, but it is Theseus' reaction that precipitates the three deaths.

After Theseus had banished Hippolytus from his sight, the Nurse disappeared in Seneca's version, denying the audience the Nurse's anagnorisis and catharsis. Garnier, however, allows the character one more monologue that fully realizes her tragic flaw and culminates in her suicide. It also represents the final expansion of Garnier's Nurse, whose actions are so central to the tragedy that he addressed her recognition of remorse, *i.e.* her anagnorisis:

O moy sur tout cruelle, et digne d'une peine
La plus griefve qui soit en l'infemale plaine!
C'est par toy, ma Maistresse, et pour couvrir ton mal,
Que je tramé sur luy crime capital.
Hé! le pauvre jeune home, il est par ma malice,

Oh how I am especially cruel, and worthy of the most
Grieving of punishments on the infernal plain!
It is because of you, mistress, and in order to cover up your crime
That I devised this heinous crime against him.
Oh! It is because of my guile that this poor young man is

⁶ „through a new wrongdoing, let us skillfully cover the one that we have already committed“

Comme le simple agneau qu'on mène au sacrifice. Like the humble lamb that one leads to slaughter⁷.

(*Hippolyte* 1853-1858)

The Nurse recognizes her tragic flaw—her mother-like bond for Phaedra—that blinded her and caused her ruin. She accepts the blame for her actions and the death of Hippolytus, which further reinforces the Christian undertone woven into her character by Garnier. While her suicide does release her soul, it is flawed since she only recognized her misdeeds, failing to atone honestly. This stands in contrast to the versions of Euripides and Seneca, which left the Nurse's actions unaccounted for.

Garnier's expansion of the role truly completed the tragedy by holding each character accountable, even a secondary character. The legend of Hippolytus and Phaedra provided him with a unique opportunity to project the woes and uncertainties of his lifetime and to treat, at the same time, a subject from Roman and Greek times. Heavy modification of any of the principle roles could have potentially corrupted the general theme of the tragedy; but in the role of the Nurse, Garnier found an adaptable character that could serve its original role while adopting a secondary one.

⁷ Translated by Crystal Smith, 2010

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